



STUDENT GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE (ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE GRIEVANCES)

1. Overview

Crown Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system, academic or administrative in nature, which is easily accessible to all current students including international students.

CIHE aims to:

- Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to continuously improve the policies, programs, procedures and services of organisation,
- Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps CIHE to prevent grievances from recurring,
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality,
- Ensure that the views of each student and respondent are respected, not discriminated against or victimised,
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

The policy applies to grievances relating to actions or decisions taken by CIHE in matters relating to the administrative processes, teaching services, learning support, or breaches of CIHE policy. It also includes academic issues such as assessment, unit grades, content and/or delivery in units of study.

This policy is not intended to be contractually binding or form party of any contract between the student and CIHE.

2. Policy coverage

Students making complaints are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus of CIHE at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

3. Informal Resolution

Students making complaints-are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve their grievances informally with the staff member concerned. If the grievance is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at this informal resolution stage, the student can select to lodge a formal grievance via the procedure outlined at 4 below.

4. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by students making complaints to submit a grievance of an academic or administrative nature. Grievances are of two kinds: Academic Grievances and Administrative Grievances.



Academic Grievances

Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, content and teaching, assessment and unit grades in a course of study.

The investigations and determinations involved in academic grievance procedures are the responsibility of the Dean.

Administrative Grievances

Grievances related to administrative matters cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that CIHE holds in relation to an individual.

The investigations and determinations involved in administrative grievance procedures are the responsibility of the Registrar.

During all stages of this procedure it is CIHE's objective to:

- invite students to participate in the grievance resolution process in good faith,
- ensure staff participate in the grievance resolution process in good faith,
- ensure that students and staff are treated respectfully and fairly throughout the process,
- ensure that the student making complaint and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against,
- ensure that student confidentiality is maintained at all times,
- ensure that the student making a complaint has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person (not being a qualified lawyer acting in a professional capacity) at any relevant meetings,
- provide a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process to all relevant parties,
- record the determination, any evidence considered and all action taken to resolve the grievance,
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student making the complaint, CIHE will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome,

A student making complaint shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. The costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by CIHE and the student making the complaint.

4.1 Stage one – formal grievance:

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Dean for Academic Grievances or the Registrar for Administrative Grievances via the CIHE website 'Making a complaint' portal.

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process aims to commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and completed within six (6) weeks.



The Dean or Registrar, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the student making the complaint hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the student making the complaint. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the student or respondent may ask another person to accompany them as a support person.

The Dean or Registrar, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the student making the complaint on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the student of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

4.2 Stage two – internal appeal:

If a student making complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance they may lodge an appeal with the CEO within twenty working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the student and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The student making complaint or the respondent may ask another person (not being a qualified lawyer acting in a professional capacity) to accompany them to these interviews as a support person.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the student advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the student making the complaint of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

4.3 Stage three – external appeal (domestic students):

If the student making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal then an independent mediator can be requested through the Resolution Institute. The student can contact the Resolution Institute directly as follows:

Address: Level 1, 13-15 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 02 9251 3366 **Freecall:** 1800 651 650
Fax: 02 9251 3733 **Email:** leadr@leadr.info

The costs of such mediation will be shared equally by CIHE and the student making the complaint. As a guide, mediator's costs would be \$385 for the first four hours (or part thereof). Subsequent hours would be \$137.50 per hour. It is common for most disputes to be resolved within the initial four-hour allocation.

If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, CIHE must implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the student within 20 working days.



4.4 Stage three – external appeal (international students):

If the student making complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are an international student then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

CIHE agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of such recommendations.

Note: Complaints or grievances related to academic merits are not dealt by OSO.

5. Further action

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection or other laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies but it would be expected that a complainant would first seek to have their grievance resolved under this policy

6. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, CIHE will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

7. Record keeping & confidentiality

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at 116 Pacific Highway North Sydney.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by CIHE's *Privacy and Personal Information Procedures*.

8. Approval, publication and training

This Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the Board of Directors on 27.1.2017.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with CIHE through publication in the Student Handbook and on CIHE's website www.cihe.com.au

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will form part of the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the Dean and CEO).



9. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Board of Directors	27.1.2017	Document creation
1.1	Board of Directors	07.4.2017	Benchmarked against similar policies of University of Canberra, ACT. Language streamlined for greater clarity.
1.2	Board of Directors	18.1.2018	Changes made to properly distinguish academic from administrative grievances and the executive responsible for oversight, management and monitoring.

Document owner: CEO